The Progressive Review

Nbr 298 May 1991

Memo to an unknown candidate

Here are a few thoughts that may be helpful in the months ahead:

You are a Democrat: Remembering this simple fact will clearly distinguish you from your opponents. Traditionally, the Democratic Party was the party of the average American, the Republican Party was for the corporations, the wealthy and the powerful. In recent years, however, Democrats have been taking so much money from the corporations, the wealthy and the powerful that many have forgotten the difference. This country's elite is more than adequately represented by the GOP; it doesn't need your help. Millions of ordinary citizens do.

This is a political campaign, not a job interview: Most current American political debate can be summarized as follows: *I will do the same thing as my opponent, only better. I will be more patriotic, cut more waste, be more sensitive to the needs of the citizens and so forth.* But real politics isn't about *who*, but about *how*. Unless you are willing to show *how* your politics will be different, you will be just one more talking head in the C-Span of history.

The future of the republic, frankly, does not depend upon your election. It may depend upon whether the American people deal with the real issues before them. If no one ever tells them, they will never know.

This is not a guaranteed recipe for victory, only for honor. Maybe you won't win, maybe only your country will. On the other hand, if you do it right, you may so amaze people that they will rush to your cause in gratitude. Only one thing is certain: if you opt for political mediocrity, you're not making your task any easier. There's too much competition.

Don't apologize: One of the most distasteful scenes of late has been that of a procession of progressive legislators testing excuses for their vote on the war. There are several good reasons not to follow in their footsteps:

- Your position was right, both morally and in terms of rational foreign policy. Don't be afraid to argue the point in a non-belligerent manner. Rep. Nancy Pelosi said it nicely the other day, "I don't want to rain on anyone's parade, but I think it's clear we would have been better off with the original sanctions policy." You may not win the argument but you will definitely lose if you don't try.
- Everyone knows where you stood on the war and nothing you say now to the contrary can make you look other than like a weasel. If you hold your ground, people may at least admire your honesty and your constancy.
- The war was not as popular as it seemed. The pro-war hysteria was created by a highly sophisticated short-term propaganda blitz that relied heavily on people not learning the facts. Some people didn't know enough to express their doubts; others were scared to express them. Find them.

Terry Sanford did. As Michael Barone was writing that Democrats were "still reeling from how wrong they were about the Persian Gulf," David Broder was claiming that the hawks had been "vindicated," and their peers were passing on administration spin as news, the North Carolina senator took a four-day tour to find out what those not under contract to media corporations thought. He went to one town meeting and asked the 300 persons present how many thought he was in political trouble. Three raised their hands. He said later, "I simply don't think this is an issue... I don't think we are in political trouble because I think it would be disgraceful if we sent young people to war without debating the issues." Reported the Raleigh

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News & Observer, Sanford "met with hundreds of voters this week. He encountered no angry confrontations, no demands that the senator explain himself. Most voters were more interested in talking about issues ranging from the economy to the environment to campaign finance."

● The war is not going to get any more popular. This wasn't the Falklands or Panama, in which you kill, go home and live happily ever after. The postwar consequences of the Iraqi escapade, as have already been seen, are enormous. The payoff isn't a new world order, but increased chaos, conflict and famine. Bush is already dropping in the polls, in part due to his cynical bait and switch tactics against the Iraqi rebels. Already, according to a Newsweek survey, a majority of Americans no longer consider the Iraqi affair a victory. We have won in the Middle East, as a soldier in a John Steinbeck story says, like a fly conquering 200 miles of flypaper. Keep in mind that in America today, revisionism is the work of journalists, not historians. And it takes a heap of revisionism to keep columnists in columns. Remember Panama? Well, no on else does. Remember that.

Don't take advice from your enemies. Believing gratuitous recommendations from columnists, commentators and the crypto-Republican wing of the Democratic Party will produce only catatonia, not constituents. Much of this advice is the result of watching too much TV sports. After all, the logic that those who opposed the war were wrong because the US won would also justify Germany's invasion of Poland or the attack on Pearl Harbor.

The power groupies in the press have been saying that the Democrats can't win unless they put up someone who was in favor of the war. They apparently didn't see the mid-February poll of Opinion Research Corporation which put various Dems up against Bush. Albert Gore, who came out of his crisis of convenience in favor of slaughtering Iraqis, got eleven percent. Jesse Jackson, who

The Progressive Review

Politically incorrect since 1966

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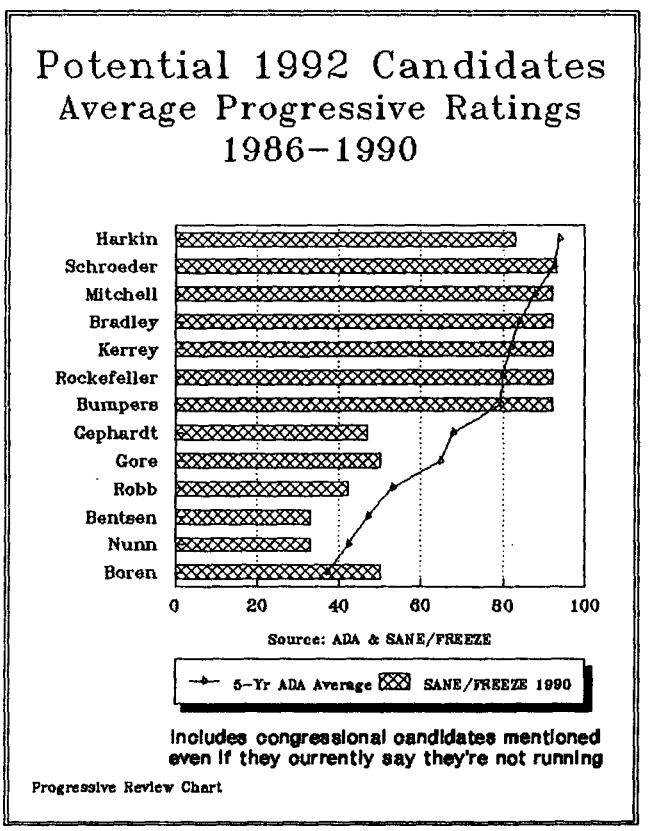

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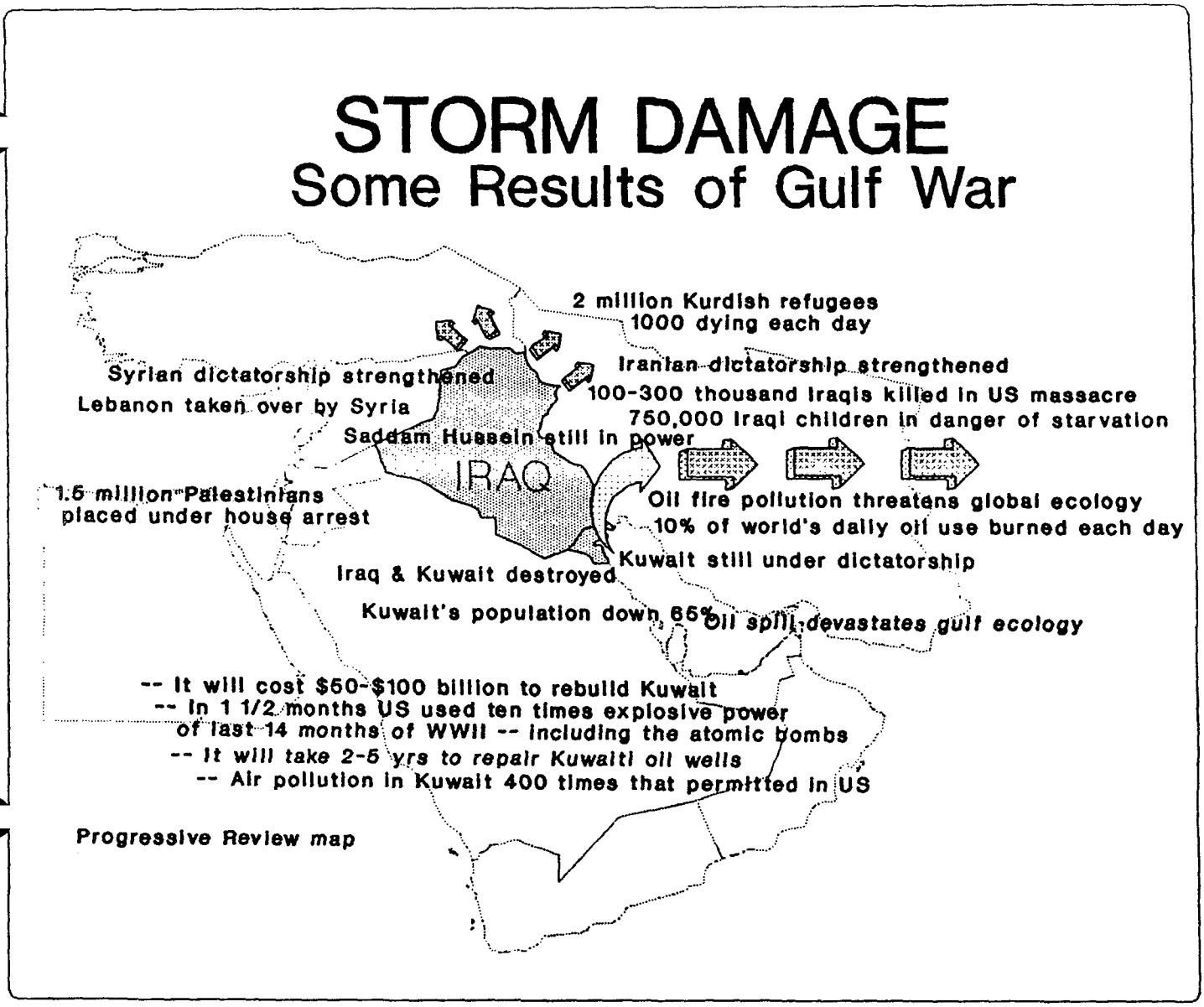
STORM DAMAGE
Some Results of Gulf War
2 million Kurdish refugees
1000 dying each day
Iranian dictatorship strengthened
100-300 thousand Iraqis killed in US massacre
750,000 Iraqi children in danger of starvation
Syrian dictatorship strengthened
Lebanon taken over by Syria
Saddam Hussein still in power
IRAQ
1.5 million Palestinians
placed under house arrest
Oil fire pollution threatens global ecology
10% of world's daily oil use burned each day
Kuwait still under dictatorship
Iraq & Kuwait destroyed
Kuwait's population down 66%
Oil spill devastates gulf ecology
-- It will cost $60-$100 billion to rebuild Kuwait
-- In 1 1/2 months US used ten times explosive power
of last 14 months of WWII -- including the atomic bombs
-- It will take 2-5 yrs to repair Kuwaiti oil wells
-- Air pollution in Kuwait 400 times that permitted in US
Progressive Review map

strongly opposed the war, got 12%. Cuomo got 14%. The Democrats have bigger problems than the war.

Besides, most of the people who are giving you bad advice never ran for public office, are doing extremely well under the status quo and don't want you to win. Take advice from people who share your goals.

Run against the party: It worked for Jimmy Carter and it could work even better this time. One thing most Americans agree about is that politicians and their parties are corrupt. The Democratic and Republican parties are little more than mafia families with ballot status, living off the vigorish of campaign contributions. Tell people how bad politics really is, how controlled your own party is by rich corporations, retrograde hacks and wriggly wimps. Start a Democratic Party reform movement.

Be a democratic Democrat: Relatively few Democrats in Washington believe in democracy any more. To them elections are little more than, as one of Tom Stoppard's characters said of revolution, a matter of "changing the capacity for self-indulgence." That voters should have a role beyond casting a ballot is inconceivable. Numbed by their blind faith in the beneficence of government, many Democrats can not perceive the terrible, cruel and mindless beast the federal executive has become -- a militaristic, authoritarian, intrusive, incompetent, profligate and tumorous institution that is destroying our two hundred year-old dream of a democratic society. We haven't even gotten a decent social welfare state out of it -- only an unwieldy, entropic welfare bureaucracy.

Yes, Ronald Reagan said he was going to get government off our back. But he lied. Catch the cry of devolution that is roaring across Europe and the Soviet Union and give it a voice in the US. We, as

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much as any Albanian or Ukrainian, deserve to be free again.

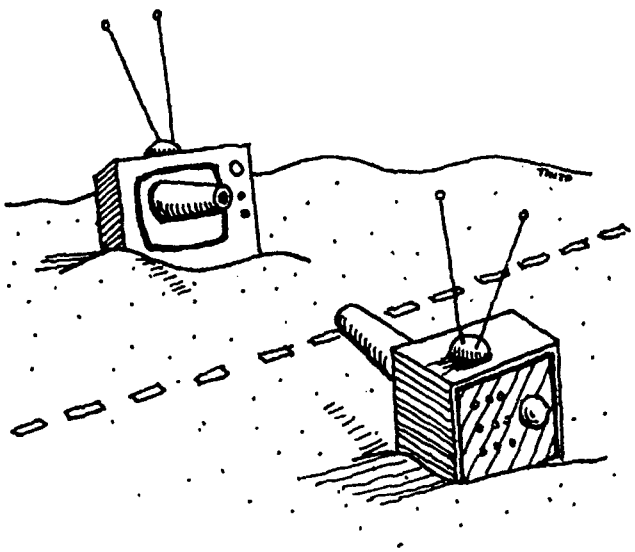
Become the candidate of democratic process. Quote Al Smith: "All the ills of democracy can be cured by more democracy." Find ways in which people can gain more power over their government. Support term limits even though you figure Democrats may be hurt in the short term. The people know term limits are fair and counter arguments will be seen as corrupt cant.

Become the candidate of decentralization. Finally break the archaic mold of federal paternalism and give real power back to those government is meant to serve. Decentralize. Stop the practice of coercing states into passing legislation under threat of withholding federal funds. Empower towns and neighborhoods. Find new ways the people's voice can be heard. Give Americans all over the country the opportunity to make their own mistakes and display their own genius. Make this country live again instead of requiring it merely to serve and obey.

Be frugal. It's hard enough to sell people on a good new idea, almost impossible if they believe you're going to waste a lot of money on it. The liberal bias against asking too many hard questions about how the government spends its money is masochistic. The public starts asking the same questions and, unable to receive logical answers, turns on the programs as well as their administration. We are spending enormous sums on departments of education, commerce, labor, health & human services, agriculture, housing and justice. Yet in each case, the substance that the names of these departments symbolize is in a state of deterioration. Remember that for the price of one high level bureaucrat in the Department of Housing & Urban Development, you can buy a house in many parts of the country. The public would rather have the house.

Back to basics: One of the major differences between traditional American politics and today's version is that you used to be able to see, touch and feel the product of politics. We ended up with real hospitals, real roads and real houses. Today, an enormous amount of governmental time and money is spent on largely invisible programs, Many of these are perfectly worthy, but their lack of tangible substance contributes mightily to the public's cynicism towards government in general. Avoid the abstract and talk about real things that people recognize and want.

Take on the welfare fathers: The story of the Reagan-Bush administrations has been in large part one of a massive raid on the national treasury and economy by an elite of monopolists, manipulators and machiavellians. This story is not well understood by the public, which has been its victim. Tell this story over and over again. Show how government has been of the few, for the few and by the few. Find the Willie Hortons of the board room.



The war began on prime time TV
There were no sponsors for the first bombs
(later there are ads for Texaco),
so the media gave us its eyes
and we switched channels to see which war
was best.
Each network had computer graphics
to help us remember what we saw,
and the elders came to talk to us
to help us understand these events.
They explained to us what divided
the enemy's war maker from ours:
Saddam's favorite movie is The Godfather;
Bush's favorite movie is Delta Force.
And as we watch them call on their Gods,
they blow out our candles with their prayers.

1/17/91 Paul Trachtman

--Washington Peace Letter, Washington Peace Center

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Don't be afraid of new issues: Even if people don't buy all of them, they provide a means by which you can paint an vivid picture of what life will be like under your administration. They are the tools of hope.

But don't oversell them. The media is going to react to any new idea by trying to find out why it won't work. Beat it to the punch by frankly pointing out the problems that still need to be worked out. Explain how you plan to test out the ideas. Explain the public's role in determining how good the ideas are. In short, present yourself as visionary in concept but extremely pragmatic in application. Most importantly, become the candidate people will trust with a new idea.

There's another advantage to new ideas. The more you keep the media occupied with visions of the future, the less time they'll have for ghosts in your past.

Here are some ideas that are ripe for this campaign:

- *National health insurance.* The people want it but most Democratic politicians are treating it as though it might be a letter bomb. In fact, national health insurance is probably the best issue of the year.
- *Co-investment.* The whole rhetoric of social welfare could be changed with this concept. A couple of examples: A housing program in which the government provides money for home purchases in return for a proportional equity share in the properties. When a house is sold, the government gets its share of the proceeds. Housing is created, homebuyers are helped, the government stands a good chance to make a profit to be used for more housing purchases and nobody feels like they are on welfare. A similar principle could be applied to financing education. Work out actuarially what it's worth to the government in higher taxes and less subsidy to have someone decently educated and co-invest in that person's education so that both the individual and the government come out ahead. Make co-investment a straight deal between the individual and the government, like social security. Get rid of hidden subsidies to banks through loan guarantees and so forth. Make it part of a social contract between the individual and the government repaid, based on a percentage of income, with the individual's tax return.

Where will the money come from to finance such programs initially? The same place it's come from to finance the welfare fathers of the defense industries and George Bush's annual wars. Only there's this big difference. When you spend money on a tank or a B-2 bomber you kiss it good-bye. With co-investment, the government gets it back.

- *Free trade:* Free trade politics, as currently practiced, are a boon to American corporations, but trouble for American workers. Free trade has become a license for the economic and environmental exploitation of the third world, has weakened the US in economic competition with countries such as Japan, and has cost Americans jobs as US business moves overseas. While the American labor movement has been mounting an assault on the US-Mexican free trade agreement, Democratic politicians have moved unnecessarily gingerly on the issue. Give labor a hand. Don't be afraid of being called protectionist. Americans want some protection. Say what we need is less free trade and more smart trade.
- *Shorter work-week:* Many other industrialized countries have it; most Americans want it. We haven't changed the length of the work week in over half a century. Yet it would provide jobs, help women and minorities, and improve life for most Americans. Try it out. You may be pleasantly surprised.

If you have to lose, make it worthwhile. So maybe 1992 is a rebuilding year. If it looks like you're not going to win, don't act like you're in a squeaker. Create a campaign that will make future campaigns easier. Lay the groundwork the next candidate can use. Educate the public; prepare it for change, take some rational chances, soften up the Republicans for the next match. The greatest sin of Mondale and Dukakis was not that they lost but that their muddled, mushy campaigns made it harder for candidates who followed. Run a campaign that will be fondly remembered in 1996. Your fellow Democrats will be grateful. Including the candidate -- who, after all, might just be you. -- *Sam Smith*

Tim Wiener, in his excellent book, "Blank Check," gives this useful mathematical metaphor: "It takes some perspective to think in billions... Keep the following in mind: One thousand seconds is about seven minutes. One million seconds is about eleven and a half days. One billion seconds is about 32 years."

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The mediacracy

■ The recently announced Pulitzer prizes are named after a man whose achievements included helping mightily to start (along with professional peer William Randolf Hearst) the Spanish American War. Next year's awards will undoubtedly go to some journalists for covering a war their papers helped to create. A few correspondents, however, kept their wits about them, such as Malcolm Browne, longtime war correspondent for the New York Times, who noted that each press pool member, in effect, was "an unpaid employee of the department of Defense, on whose behalf he or she prepares the news of the war for the outer world."

■ Television during the war, relied heavily on "experts" who, in fact, were closely related to the military or intelligence community. As one example, the ubiquitous Dr. Jerry Post, whose pontifications on the psychological character of Saddam Hussein aired repeatedly, was only belatedly identified by one local TV station as having been a contract employee of the CIA. Not satisfied with simply repeating the official military line, networks and stations actually paid for additional Pentagon propaganda from these "experts."

■ CBS, according to the New York Times, assured advertisers that special war programming would be tailored so commercials could be inserted after segments "that were specially produced with upbeat images or messages about the war, like patriotic images from the home front."

■ On April 15, some Washington Post readers were greeted at the newsbox by a broadsheet called 'The Washington ComPost." The banner headline set the tone: "Bush announces plans for new invasion. Target to be decided soon." No one has claimed credit for the fine parody yet.

■ In an extraordinary move, the New York Times devoted over half its April 15 op ed page to a piece by a Carter administration national security advisor that added substance to long-standing reports that the Reagan-Bush campaign had arranged with the Iranians to delay the release of hostages until after the 1980 election. The piece was headlined, "The election story of the decade." (We ran a PNS story on this subject in our Nov 1988 issue, "Where was George Bush on October 20, 1980?")

Author Gary Sick states "At least five of the sources who say they were in Paris in connection [with meetings to set up the deal] insist that George Bush was present for at least one meeting. Three of the sources say that they saw him there."

What's significant about this story -- the essence of which had been previously described here and elsewhere -- is that the godfather of American journalism gave it such play. Even the Washington Post felt compelled to mention the NYT story the next day. It could be a sign that at least some of the media has decided to stop beating around the Bush. Maybe now they'll even look into Bush's role in what later became known as Iran-Contra.

> [Correspondents] should be allowed to talk freely with officers and enlisted personnel and to see the machinery of war in operation in order to visualize and transmit to the public the conditions under which the men from their countries are waging war against the enemy -- *Order from General Dwight Eisenhower issued just before D-Day*
>
> News media personnel who are not members of the official CENTCOM media pools will not be permitted into forward areas... US commanders will maintain extremely tight security throughout the operational areas and will exclude for the area of operation all unauthorized individuals. -- *Pentagon press guidelines, Iraqi war*

■ Dennis Bernstein, writing for PNS, reports that CBS and NBC officials spiked uncensored footage of civilian damage to Iraq taken during the height of the war. The film was taken by two Emmy winning producers who accompanied Ramsay Clark to Iraq in early February and had been initially approved for broadcast by the producers of the respective evening news programs, but rejected by higher-ups. Said one longtime network producer, "The pressure behind the scenes at the height of the hostilities to put out a pro-war, pro-administration message was immense." Viewers in Japan, incidentally, got to see the footage. A 28-minute version of the material is being shown to packed houses in several cities under the name *No Place to Hide.*

■ One of the many uncovered aspects of the Gulf massacre was the use of fuel air bombs by the US. Michael Kinsley did a beaut of a story on this in the Feb 28 Washington Post, pointing out the hypocrisy of the media handling of the subject. The press first started writing about FABs as something the Iraqis might have. The New York Times, for example, reported Jan 24 that "Hussein might be planning to use [a] horrific weapon, never before employed in combat, known as the fuel air bomb, which spreads a circle of fire." But by Feb. 16, the horrific had become mundane R&D as the Washington Post wrote that "US warplanes have begun dropping... fuel air explosives on Iraqi positions to 'experiment' with their effectiveness in clearing minefields or blasting away berms and clusters of trucks and armored vehicles." Although some papers mentioned that the bombs suck every particle of oxygen from the air, the general tenor was to downplay their effect on people. Finally on Feb. 23, the Post reported, "All of the front-line Iraqi troops have been subjected to extensive bombardment, including many detonations of 10,000 BLU-82 bombs, containing fuel-air explosives." As Kinsley wrote, "But by then, who cared?"

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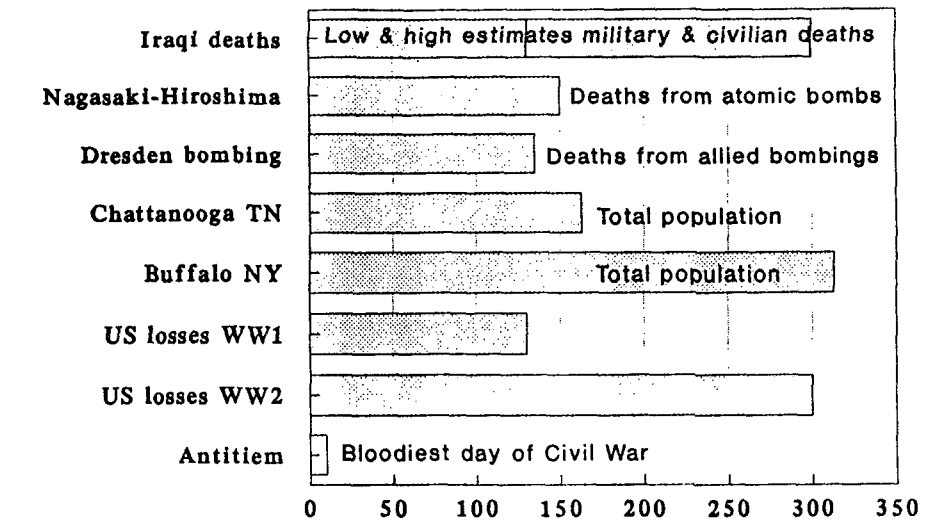
The Iraqi Massacre
Comparison of Scale



Progressive Review chart

The Weather Report

Brown president Vartan Gregorian and other priggish promoters of ethnic sensitivity at the expense of the First Amendment and the very racial progress they seek could well spend some time watching reruns of *All in the Family*. Norman Lear understood that most prejudice was dumb rather than criminal and that foolishness is better treated with parody, corrective experience and education than by regulation and banishment. Archie Bunker, unlike the drunken Brown student yelling racial epithets, was not expelled from the family; week after week he was cajoled, confronted, confounded and corrected, because those around him were able to express their love of humanity in individual as well as ethnically aggregated terms. During the years of Archie Bunker, America still strove, if failingly, to improve racial relations. Few wanted to be as stupid as Archie.

Now America -- from the White House to college campuses -- is very careful of what is said about its ethnic minorities but increasingly indifferent to what is happening to them. Today's Archie Bunker has only learned to keep his mouth shut. We have moved from a rambunctious era of civil rights to an era of very polite and civil wrongs.

■

You may recall a piece in the December '89 issue discussing the effects of political correctness on college campuses well ahead of mainstream media discovery. The college described, although not identified, was Brown, thus lending support to our occasional motto, "The News Before It Happens." Incidentally, the Brown controversy, in which a student was expelled for ethnic epithets, began in a manner only possible at a school with courses in semiotics. A student, upon hearing the cursing, shouted lustily something like, "Stop that. I find that offensive." The ethnic blasphemer than turned on the complainant and relayed certain anti-semitic opinions. At which point, as later recounted to the Brown Daily Herald, the aggrieved student found the remarks not only offensive but "*personally* offensive." Being able to make such distinctions in times of great stress is the mark of a fine education, but not necessarily the most effective technique to use with a drunk.

■

Our piece on the S&L bailout scandal [Aug 90] was cited by Project Censored in its listing of the top censored stories of last year. The project selects major stories that are under-reported by the media. Other stories in the top ten:

- Flawed coverage of the Gulf war.
- The CIA role in the S&L crisis.
- NASA shuttles destroying the ozone layer.
- Media blackout of drug war fraud.
- What really happened in Panama
- The Pentagon's black budget.
- Legislation that could have nullified the Bill of Rights by declaring a national drug and crime emergency.

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■ The role of George Bush in the Iran-Contra scandal.

■ America's banking crisis.

Faithful readers will note that we gave major attention to a number of these stories and mention to others.

■

A major undercovered story these days is the move towards a North American free trade agreement, which would open up Mexican cheap labor to American corporate exploitation. Even without the FTA, American industry has been steadily moving out of the country to the extent that about a half million Mexicans are already working for companies like Zenith, GE, Ford and Chrysler, at plants known as maquiladoras. The next US plane reservation you make may be handled by a computer manned by cheap labor on a Caribbean island. AT&T is not only in Mexico but as far away as India, where it uses technicians there to do remote work on its American computers.

If the FTA is approved, some 90 million Mexicans would, in effect, enter the US job pool at much lower wages. Even an International Trade Commission report says that "unskilled workers" in the US will suffer a "slight decline" in real wages. The commission doesn't

What The Soviets Could Learn From The Swiss

When Soviet tanks plowed through a crowd of Lithuanian civilians trying to defend their broadcast station in Vilnius, killing 15 and wounding over a hundred, perestroika suffered a tragic setback.

Under the policy of glasnost, many of the nationalities whose desire for greater autonomy or independence was long suppressed have found the courage to express their pent-up feelings. This is escalatory, resembling a flood breaking through a crack in a dike and washing it away. To stop these centrifugal forces once they have been set in motion is extremely difficult.

How should the Soviet leadership deal with this upsurge of nationalist movements? Two contrasting experiences with similar problems elsewhere, sectarian strife between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland and Switzerland, may point toward a solution.

In Northern Ireland, the Catholics have long sought to join the Catholic Irish Republic. The Protestants naturally fear their fate as a minority in Ireland and want to remain British. This conflict has intensified over many years and finally led to street fighting and political assassinations. London has taken a hard line, trying to suppress the strife with armed force. This strategy has not been successful, and the violence continues. As Gene Sharp, director of Harvard's Center for Non-Violent Sanctions, put it, suppressing a conflict with violent means without addressing its roots is like trying to prevent steam from escaping a cauldron by pressing the lid on it, while allowing the fire under it to blaze uncontrolled.

A similar conflict developed in the 1950's in the canton Bern in Switzerland, where a French speaking Catholic minority in the Jura region felt constantly overruled by the German speaking Protestant majority. The cantonal government in Bern sought to persuade the French speaking minority that it was in their own best interest to remain with the canton, since they received economic subsidies. But only the people of the Jura themselves could decide what they valued more, economic subsidies or self-government. As the process dragged on, demonstrations became more frequent, and some cases of politically motivated arson occurred. No one was killed, but there is little doubt that if the conflict had remained unsolved, it could ultimately have developed into a civil war like that in Northern Ireland.

After a long delay, the Bernese government finally agreed to hold a referendum to let the people in the Jura decide whether they preferred to form their own canton or to remain within the canton Bern. The first vote was about evenly split. So a second vote was held separately in each of six districts. Three districts, bordering on the German speaking part of the canton, had majorities preferring the old arrangement, while the three districts that were farther removed from the center preferred separation. After that vote, each community along the borderline was allowed to choose whether it preferred to stay where it was or switch sides. Some switched. In 1978 the new canton Jura was founded and welcomed by the voters of Switzerland as a member of the confederation. Since then, the violence has subsided, since most people got what they wanted, or respected the verdict of the voters.

Self-determination is an effective means of conflict resolution. It does not guarantee that the optimal decision will be taken in all cases. But if people make a mistake and suffer the consequences, they have nobody but themselves to blame, and they simply have to try to do better at the next opportunity. If, however, some far removed central government makes a decision for the people and they suffer, they have good reason to project their anger at those responsible.

Economic integration and political unification with uniform laws can be mutually beneficial for all those participating. But such cooperation must be on a voluntary basis, as it is now developing within the European Community. If it is enforced from above, it will cause understandable resentment, and may lead to violence.

The secret of Switzerland's long-lasting unity and stability may lie in its diversity. It does not impose uniformity from a center, but allows a great deal of local self-determination. Cooperation is the result of negotiations between all of the parties involved and is entirely voluntary, not forced upon them. This may hold a useful lesson how the Soviet Union can successfully deal with its nationality problem, and may also indicate how efforts at economic and political integration in Europe and elsewhere can be made to last.

Dietrich Fischer, an Associate Professor at Pace University in White Plains, New York, is author of ***Preventing War in the Nuclear Age*** and co-author of ***Winning Peace*** and ***Warfare and Welfare***

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World War II.3 News Update

■ As we pointed out in the last issue, there was more than a slight discrepancy between the number of Iraqi troops we were meant to be fighting and the number anyone can now account for. This is not a trivial matter, since the alleged half million troop size of the Iraqi force helped considerably to support the contention that we were up against a "new Hitler." Now Newsweek (in a nicely downplayed box headed 'Intelligence Goofs') reports that there were only 250,000 Iraqi troops, and of these, just 150,000 were in Kuwait. Oh yes, Newsweek also now reports that not a single chemical weapon has been found.

■ In our last issue we noted the role of Margaret Thatcher in pushing the US into war. If Chris Buckland of the Daily Express is correct, it may have been even greater than we indicated. On August 10, Buckland wrote, "The White House finally admitted yesterday that Mrs. Thatcher played a crucial role in persuading President Bush to send a huge military force -- the biggest since Vietnam -- into the Middle East... The President had been resisting calls for a military response... until he met Mrs. Thatcher in Aspen, Colorado, last Thursday. Mrs. Thatcher stiffened the President's resolve in their first 100-minute meeting... Before the first of their three meetings... Mr. Bush had been ruling out a military response. Immediately after their first talks he changed his mind and refused to exclude this option."

■ The Washington Post headline read, "Half-Tank, Half-Taxi Bradley Proves Worth in Battle." But half-down the story, after parroting the Army's official line and failing to note how seldom the Bradley actually came under fire, the writers make this curious comment:

Because of the Bradley's dual role as a fighter and a transporter, the Army has had to adjust its tactical doctrine to use the vehicle. When enemy fire is too heavy for the Bradley's relatively thin aluminum skin to withstand, the vehicle is supposed to hang back. Depending on the circumstances, its six infantrymen may stay with the Bradley or may push forward on foot accompanying the tanks, with the Bradley and its three-man crew trailing behind.

In other words, when the going gets tough, the Bradley runs for cover. Since, under such circumstances, it would seem to be neither a fighter nor a transporter, it is hard to understand its role under the new tactical doctrine, except to convince gullible members of Congress and the media that the vehicles' critics were wrong.

■ Early beneficiary of Bush's Middle East Marshmallow Plan is Oliver North, who -- according to the Loudoun Times Mirror of suburban Virginia -- owns a company that will be providing nearly a million dollars worth of bullet-resistant vests for Kuwaiti officials, presumably to protect them from Kuwaiti citizens.

Mopping up

We have never seen a pollution event of this scale-- *Richard Small, Pacific-Sierra Research Corporation*

[The Kuwaiti oil well fires are] the most intense burning source, probably, in the history of the world. -- *Joel Levine of NASA, expert on biomass burning*

Now that Kuwait's free, it's not fit to live in. -- *Mohammed Khaye of the Saudi Ministry of Information.*

■ Robert Fisk of the London Independent describes intervening with Colin Smith of the Observer to prevent Kuwaiti troops from continuing to beat up a Palestinian boy on a bicycle. Several of the Kuwaiti armored vehicles were flying American flags. "But the Special Forces troops accompanying the Kuwaitis did nothing to help. When I asked the American officer why he allowed the Kuwaitis to beat up civilians, he replied, 'You having a nice day? We don't want your sort around here with your dirty rumors. You have a big mouth. This is martial law, boy. Fuck off.' US Special Forces attached to the Kuwaitis have no names on their tunics, but have small Kuwaiti flags stitched to their uniforms."

■ Robert Reid, regional director of the UNICEF, told a news conference that Iraq is "right on the edge of what could be a complete catastrophe -- especially on the epidemic side... The postwar death rate in Iraq certainly could be much, much higher that the combined civilian and military death toll during the war itself."

■ The San Francisco board of supervisors, under pressure to rescind its declaration that the city was a sanctuary for conscientious objectors, decided instead to reaffirm the decision made in January. The vote was 7-4.

■ You have heard, no doubt, of Iraq having had the fourth largest military in the world. What you probably didn't know is that it also had less than one percent of American GNP, roughly the economic output of Kentucky.

■ Theodore Postol of MIT reports that after the Patriot missiles arrived in the Gulf and began breaking up SCUDS in midair, there were 15% fewer SCUD attacks but the number of apartments reported damaged tripled and the number of injuries went up by 50%, apparently proving Isaac Newton's second theorem, namely that two or more apples falling from a tree sky hurt more than one.

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indicate who these unskilled workers are, but according to an op-ed piece in the Washington Post by AFL-CIO secretary-treasurer Thomas R. Donahue, they include anyone with four years of high school or less, i.e. 52% of the US labor force.

The maquiladoras offer some insight into life after the FTA. Workers at US-owned plants in Mexico are currently earning about 60-80 cents an hour, getting their drinking water from 50-gallon drums that may have formerly contained toxic materials and, according to the Wall Street Journal, live under conditions that are "helping turn much of the border region into a sinkhole of abysmal living conditions and environmental degradation."

■

The term *African-American* apparently isn't catching on. A survey by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, a black oriented think-tank, found that 72% of black Americans prefer to be called black, 15 percent African-Americans, 3 percent Afro-Americans and 2 percent Negroes. Even among blacks with some college education, African-American got only 20% support.

■

Panama President Endara, beneficiary of George Bush's Just Cause I Want To, is not faring so well. His popularity rating is down to 14% according to a March poll.

■

Role Models

NFL Commissioner Paul Tagliabue, who got so upset at Arizona failing to make Martin Luther King's birthday a state holiday, spent that same day at his office, according to the Washington Times. Explained an NFL flack, the office was open because it's "our crunch time. It's like April 15 for tax attorneys and accountants."

Richard Cheney, who opposes a proposed law that would excuse one parent from combat for married troops with children. Rep. Barbara Boxer notes that Cheney received his Vietnam deferment from the draft because his wife was pregnant.

David Frost, who set a new journalistic standard in a National Press Club speech in which he said that when "you're in a situation of a war like this, a just war like this, the job of a journalist in this country or in Britain is to be objective, is to be truthful, but not to be neutral." The pressies on hand applauded the statement.

Political climber Douglas Wilder, who's beginning to make Bush look like an altruist, proposed requiring drug tests for students at Virginia's public colleges. We should have known something was wrong with the guy when, while running for lieutenant government, he accused his opponent of being a racist for having called Wilder a liberal.

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